REMARKS

Status of the claims

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 3, and 5-17 are pending and under consideration. It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is traversed.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 103

Claims 1, 5, 7-11, 13, and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Egnell et al. (6,590,681) in view of Johansson (5,680,235) and Sridhar (5,778,11).

Egnell relates to drop couplers 17e, 17w that arc optical power splitters that feed a portion of the total power of the light propagating in one direction in the bus, through an optical combining coupler 19, adding the deflected power portions from each direction to each other, to a bank 21 of filters, which can also be called an optical demultiplexer, having one or more bandpass filters for wavelengths used in the transmission in the network. The filter bank 21 filters out channels, each channel carrying information in a definite wavelength band.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Johansson teaches *the blocking filters*. Johansson relates to an AOTF that acts as a switch that directs nearby channels, simultaneously and independently, to either of two ports. The AOTF distributes channels by flipping the polarization state of a carrier having an optical frequency that is a multiple of an applied sound frequency Rf. Optical channels having frequencies that are multiples of the applied sound frequency Rf are directed into one port of the AOTF, while other optical channels are directed to the other AOTF's other port. *See* col. 8, lines 56-67.

Sridhar relates to an optical add-drop multiplexer for wavelength division multiplexed optical communication systems which includes first and second optical couplers which optically communicate with each other through an optical filter.

Neither Sridhar, Egnall, nor Johansson teach or suggest "a plurality of variable wavelength filters that extract a plurality of optical signals from the dropping signal that is branched by the optical branching coupler, **each variable wavelength filter is controllable to selectively extract** different optical signals at different wavelengths from the dropping signal" as recited in claim 1 (emphasis added). Accordingly, claim 1 is patentably distinguished over the cited art.

Claims 5, 7-11, 13 and 16 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of that claim, plus additional features that are not taught or suggested by the cited art and therefore patentably distinguish over the cited art.

Claims 3, 6, 14, and 15 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unaptentable over Egnell et al. in view of Johansson and Asahi (6,195,186).

Egnell states that for the standard connection, the "transmitters of a node are in a natural way divided in transmitters 13e for sending in the east going direction and transmitters 13w for sending in the west going direction." Each transmitter 13e and 13w has its output terminal connected to a simple 1:2 switch 33e, 33w. If the "bus has to flex", one of the receiver switches 39e, 39w then has to change its position and that one of the switches 33e, 33w connected to a transmitter 13e, 13w that sends to the same node also has to change its positions. *See* col. 9, lines 37-45.

Johansson relates to nodes that include one or more transmitters T that are coupled to both optical fibers 5, 6 by either WDMs or ordinary couplers, enable the transmitters T to send in both directions.

Asahi relates to an optical transmitter 301 that can select a transmitting wavelength from λ_1-λ_n depending on which node signal should be transmitted to. The optical transmitter 301 is composed of an LD controller 401, a tunable laser diode (LD) 402 and an external modulator 403. The LD controller 401 controls the output wavelength of the tunable laser diode 402 depending on a wavelength selection signal.

Neither Engall, Johansson nor Asahi teach or suggest "a plurality of variable wavelength lasers that generate a plurality of optical signals to be inserted, each variable wavelength laser is selectively controlled to generate different optical signals at **different wavelengths from the *dropping signal***" as recited in claim 3 (emphasis added). Accordingly, claim 3 is patentably distinguished from the cited art.

Claims 6, 14 and 15 depend from claim 3 and include all of the features of that claim, plus additional features that are not taught or suggest by the cited art and therefore patentably distinguish over the cited art.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unaptentable over Engell et al in view of Johansson and Sridhar and further in view of Adams et al (EP 1063803).

Claim 12 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of that claim, plus additional features that are not taught or suggested by the cited art and therefore patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unaptentable over Egnell et al. in view of Johansson and Sridhar and further in view of Persson et al. (2002/0041411).

Claim 17 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of that claim, plus additional features that are not taught or suggested by the cited art and therefore patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

Conclusion

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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